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## ANCIENT HISTORY AND THE CLASSICS

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There is at present in the educational world a strong tendency toward the co-ordination of studies and co-operation of departments. The assertion is made that, in the high school in particular, the application of this principle would lead to a great economy of time and better results from the educational standpoint. The department of mathematics and physics in the University High School is attempting work of this nature with a good measure of success. While I do not advocate anything revolutionary and am disposed to shun correlation as a fad, it is unquestionably true that good results will follow a proper application of the principle.

The field of ancient history seems to be a suitable one in which to test the truth of this theory. How can the study of this subject, coming as it does in the first year of the high-school course, be made to contribute not only to the confessedly historical courses which follow, but also more directly to the results which all true classical teachers are laboring to achieve? Is it not practicable to supplement the work of the classical department, by imparting a knowledge of classical culture in its historical relations, and even perhaps a taste for classical literature and art, in their broadest and most human aspects?

I have taken up the consideration of this subject under three general heads: (1) the training of teachers in ancient history; (2) the present course of study; (3) a proposed course of study.

It is doubtful if there are two methods of study which are so mutually corrective as the classical and historical. The application of the historical method to the study of classical literature, art, and life has thrown a flood of light on these fields of study. On the other hand, the obligation of the historical scholar to classical men and methods can be recalled by the mention of such names as Niebuhr, Mommsen, Ihne, Busolt, Meyer.

In the nature of the case, the teacher of ancient history should have adequate training in both methods of study, and it is essential that he should have very thorough training in one. The candidate for a position in ancient history should have gained that accuracy of thought and precision of method which we associate with classical study. He should have profited in breadth of thought and freedom of sympathy from the historical sciences. The most obvious faults in the teaching of this subject in the high schools would be corrected by a well-balanced training.

The classical department of the universities seems to be best fitted to give the training needed by the teacher of ancient history. In the University of Chicago, for example, the courses in ancient history, in the history of classical literature, in Greek and Roman political and historical writers, in archaeology, epigraphy, and the history of art, are fitted to give to the teacher a sufficient training in the principles of historical investigation. And what is even more important, these courses give him that close acquaintance with ancient life which is invaluable—nay, essential—to the teacher of ancient history. These courses should be supplemented by general courses in the history department. The mediaeval period and the Renaissance particularly should be studied.

It is a favorite idea of mine that a course in humanism should be offered by the classical faculty of the university. Its value would be as great to students of philology as to those in the historical field. This course ought to include the study of the transmission of classical culture from ancient times to the present, and an examination of the humanistic spirit in the writings of such men as Petrarch, Erasmus, Milton, Goethe, and the Arnolds.

In accordance with the report of the Committee of Seven, the majority of high schools allow but one year for the study of ancient history. I believe it is the opinion of the majority of teachers that the time is inadequate for anything but a hasty survey. The course in Greek and Roman history, as taught in the academies and classical schools, covered only Greek history to the death of Alexander and Roman history to the death of Augustus. It was purely narrative, devoted to the political and

military phases of history, and unduly emphasized those periods (such as the Peloponnesian and Punic wars) which are fully treated by the classical historians. The study of civilization was neglected, and there was little insight into the life of the people. Such a course lacked the vital elements of historical unity and perspective. But, while inadequate, it had the great merit that it was practicable in the time allotted to it. On the other hand, the instructor in ancient history is expected to cover the ground from the earliest times to the coronation of Charles the Great in 800 A. D. Thus oriental and mediaeval history are added to the field. Whatever plan is followed in organizing this course, the instructor finds that the time limits imposed prevent an adequate acquaintance with the source material, which seems to the writer of supreme importance in this field of history. It may be that the best solution of the problem is to allow two years to ancient history, with say three recitations per week, the two extra periods being used for informal readings from the sources. This plan allows for that close personal contact between the student and teacher which is essential to the most successful use of the source method.

The rational use of this method does not need any defense on this occasion. As classical scholars we are all believers in the principles underlying the use of the sources in historical study. In modern history that multiplication of the sources which is the delight of the investigator is apt to prove dangerous to the instructor and confusing rather than enlightening to the student. In the classical writers, on the other hand, the sources are comparatively few in number, and are of the highest intrinsic value apart from their usefulness as historical material. They demand and amply repay that careful attention, that concentration of the mental faculties, which is the foundation of true scholarship in any line. Even translation cannot obscure their supreme literary value and eternal human significance.

While writing this paper I happened upon Mr. Sissons' article in the *School Review* for November. In this article he sets forth a plan for a "Reading Course in the Classics in English." While I agree with the writer as to the great educative value of such

reading, I apprehend that the course in question would suffer from the lack of the co-ordinating element supplied by the historical narrative. If the classical literature is to be divorced from the original languages, should we not in compensation give these works their proper historical setting? It is doubtful if the four-year course, advocated by Mr. Sisson, could be adopted as it stands. The two-year course, which I have suggested, has the advantage of fitting into the course of study of many schools and being practicable for all. If the colleges and universities should agree to grant such a course two units' credit, a great obstacle to its adoption would be removed.

The plan is, in effect, an application of the laboratory method to the study of history. Its platform is the dictum that to understand history aright we must know how the people thought and felt. How direct and wonderful is the influence of such national movements as the Persian and Peloponnesian wars on popular thought and feeling, as reflected in literature and art! We have no such convincing examples in later history.

In the task of selecting the material to be used, the criteria of intrinsic excellence and historical significance should be applied. Some works might be read in part, others entire; some selections assigned for cursory reading, others for careful study. The informal readings with the instructor are an essential feature of the plan. The younger high-school pupils need training in apprehension even more than training in judgment. It is the experience of the writer that constant oral reading by both instructor and students is the most effective way to make the duller students realize the personages and events of history.

The stock objection to the use of translations, that these works can be fully appreciated only in the original, is granted, but still their historical significance remains in the translation. That the result of such a course is simply a deceptive smattering of classical literature is a case of viewing high-school problems from the focal distance of university work. It certainly is unjust to deprive the great majority of high-school students of a knowledge of the ancient writers, because they have not the time or inclination to become specialists in classical philology.

It does not need impassioned speech on my part to set forth the advantages of such a plan. In an age of specialization, what better corrective than the grounding in general culture which would result from such a course, what more valuable asset than an appreciation of the clear vision and sane wisdom of the ancients gained at the most impressionable period of the pupils' life!